NAXOS

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8.550480

Romantic French Music for Guitar and Orchestra

Debussy • Fauré • Satie

Gerald Garcia, Guitar
CSFR State Philharmonic Orchestra (Košice)
Peter Breiner

Claude Debussy (1862 - 1918)
Gabriel Fauré (1845 - 1924)
Erik Satie (1866 - 1925)

There is a story that the great guitarist and transcriber, Miguel Llobet, once asked Debussy to write a piece for the guitar, but then failed to turn up for the appointment. Even if the story is apocryphal the fact remains that one of the twentieth century composers who was best suited temperamentally to write for the guitar never did. Manuel de Falla, who in fact did write a guitar piece, dedicated it to the memory of Debussy, simultaneously fulfilling a commission from Llobet. The piece, a homage to Debussy, quotes from La soirée dans Grenade, of which de Falla had this to say: "The intense feeling of Spain crystallized in La soirée dans Grenade is something of a miracle if one considers that it was written by a foreigner, led only by a brilliant intuition". I hope that my orchestration of this piece returns the compliment to de Falla, quoting as it does from his own orchestration of Hommage à Debussy, and that this collection goes some way towards filling a noticeable gap in the guitar repertoire.

Most of the pieces transcribed were originally for the piano - La fille aux cheveux de lin, La soirée dans Grenade and Clair de lune are taken from larger collections - Préludes, Estampes and Suite bergamasque respectively. Doctor Gradus ad Parnassum, The Little Shepherd and Golliwog's Cake-walk are from Children's Corner Suite, dedicated to Debussy's daughter, Chou-Chou, and En bateau and Ballet are from the Petite suite for two pianos.

The other pieces by Debussy are isolated early compositions and I have tried to choose those which show a wide range of influences from the dry plains of Andalusia to the water-gardens of Japan by way of the theatre and circus atmosphere of late nineteenth century Paris. Debussy does with sound what the Impressionist painters were doing with light. His compositions are a natural

choice for arrangement and this selection highlights the mellow tones of the guitar against the rainbow hues of the orchestra.

Debussy himself was no stranger to the orchestra. He not only produced such ambitious works as Images, La mer and Pelléas et Mélisande, but also orchestrated several works by other composers. One of these was the anarchical Erik Satie who influenced both Debussy and Ravel, who tried for many years to gain him public recognition. Satie's Gymnopédies are his best known compositions and I have followed Debussy's lead in orchestrating the first and third. The mysterious title suggests ancient Greek dances. Satie's eccentricity did not gain him friends in the musical establishment, and for some years he was forced to make a living as a night-club pianist. Je te veux is taken from the piano version of a rather direct love-song made famous at that time by Paulette Darty, known as the Queen of the Slow Waltz. I have used the full orchestra, each section of which awaits its turn in a sort of Homage to Hollywood. The ending has nothing to do with Satie at all, but I hope that he would appreciate the humorous intention of the quotation from La valse, one of Ravel's larger orchestral works.

Another composer under the spell of Maeterlinck's story Pelléas and Mélisande was the one-time director of the Paris Conservatoire, Gabriel Fauré. Sicilienne, originally orchestrated by Fauré's pupil Charles Koechlin, is taken from his incidental music to the drama and occurs at the point where Mélisande loses her wedding-ring in a fountain. The Pavane Op. 50 originally included a choral part and evokes the Middle Ages. It aptly illustrates Debussy's comment on his music - "The play of fleeting curves that is the essence of Fauré's music can be compared to the movements of a beautiful woman without either suffering from the comparison".

G. Garcia © 1992

Gerald Garcia

At his 1979 Wigmore Hall début in London, one critic hailed Gerald Garcia as a performer of rare quality and he has been described by John Williams as one of today's foremost guitarists. Garcia has made many tours of the Far East and Europe and has appeared at the major international festivals in Great Britain, including the Edinburgh, Aldeburgh and South Bank Festivals. His concert engagements have included performances with many leading ensembles and soloists, among them the London Sinfonietta, John Williams and Friends and Paco Peña. With the flautist Clive Conway he has toured and broadcast extensively in Britain and has played at the Glastonbury Pop Festival and on the ocean liner the QE II. Gerald Garcia was born in Hong Kong and now lives in Oxford, his base for a busy career as recitalist, composer and conductor.

Czecho-Slovak State Philharmonic Orchestra (Košice)

The East Slovakian town of Košice boasts a long and distinguished musical tradition, as part of a province that once provided Vienna with musicians. The State Philharmonic Orchestra is of relatively recent origin and was established in 1968 under the conductor Bystrik Rezucha. Subsequent principal conductors have included Stanislav Macura and Ladislav Slovák, the latter succeeded in 1985 by his pupil Richard Zimmer. The orchestra has toured widely in Eastern and Western Europe and plays an important part in the Košice Musical Spring and the Košice International Organ Festival.

For Marco Polo the orchestra has made the first compact disc recordings of rare works by Granville Bantock and Joachim Raff. Writing on the last of these, one critic praised the orchestra for its competence comparable to that of the major orchestras of Vienna and Prague. The orchestra has contributed many successful volumes to the complete compact disc Johann Strauss II and for Naxos has recorded a varied repertoire.

Peter Breiner

Peter Breiner was born in 1957 at Humenne in Eastern Slovakia where he started piano lessons at the age of four. He went on to study at the Bratislava Conservatory and then at the Prague College of Music and Drama, concentrating at the latter in composition. On completing his studies he began work as musical supervisor of the Czechoslovak Radio in Bratislava and for OPUS Records and Publishing House. He has had a varied career which has involved the conductorship of the Czechoslovak Radio Children's Choir, regular piano performances at jazz concerts and working as an orchestral conductor and arranger.

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STEREO

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Playing Time : 58'56"

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DEBUSSY:

1	La fille aux cheveux de lin	(2:14)
2	Arabesque No. 1	(5:12)
3	Clair de lune	(4:02)
4	Doctor Gradus ad Parnassum	(3:08)
5	The Little Shepherd	(2:22)
6	Golliwog's Cake Walk	(2:49)

FAURÉ:

7	Pavane	(7:13)
8	Sicilienne	(3:52)

DEBUSSY:

9	Soirée dans Grenade	(5:01)
10	Rêverie	(4:13)
11	En Bâteau	(3:55)
12	Ballet	(3:52)

SATIE:

13	Gymnopédie No. I	(2:59)
14	Gymnopédie No. III	(2:15)
15	Je te veux	(5:08)

Recorded at the House of Arts in Košice, from 1st to 4th July, 1989
(Tracks 1-3, 6, 10, 13 & 15) and
from 10th to 13th December, 1990 (4, 5, 7-9, 11, 12 & 14)
Producer: Jaroslav Rybár
Engineer: Otto Nopp
Music Notes: Gerald Garcia
All arrangements and orchestrations by G. Garcia (HNH Int'l. Ltd.)

Cover Painting: Woman Playing the Guitar by Renoir

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